

REMARKS

In the final Office Action dated February 19, 2009 (paper no. 20090208), the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 37-41, 44-45, and 52-57 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0110503 by Perkes ("Perkes"), U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0056123 by Ligerant et al. ("Ligerant"), and U.S. Patent No. 6,745,242 to Schick et al. ("Schick"); rejected claims 6 and 42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Perkes, Ligerant, and U.S. Patent No. 6,854,010 to Christian et al. ("Christian"); rejected claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Perkes, Ligerant, and U.S. Patent No. 6,617,879 to Chung ("Chung"); rejected claims 8, 43, 46-49, and 51 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Perkes, Ligerant, and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0152432 by Fleming ("Fleming"); and rejected claim 50 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Perkes, Ligerant, Fleming, and Christian.

In this response, applicants amend claims 1, 5, 7, 37, 46, and 55 to clarify the subject matter for which protection is sought. Claims 1-8 and 37-57 are currently pending in this application. Applicants respectfully submit that these amendments should be entered under 37 CFR § 1.116(b)(2) because they present the pending claims in better form for consideration on appeal.

A. Perkes

Perkes describes a system for presenting media on demand. (Perkes, Abstract.) A viewer may view and/or schedule the delivery of broadcast segments. When a broadcaster is ready to deliver a broadcast segment to the user, the broadcaster initiates an intent to transmit notice. If the viewer is currently on line, the viewer is provided with information about the broadcast segment, and is given the option to accept or refuse download of the segment. (Perkes, ¶ [0078].)

B. Schick

Schick describes a method of monitoring network performance. A server sends pinging signals to multiple resource targets, and determines the status of the targets based on whether or not the targets respond to the pinging signals. (Schick, Abstract.) Schick's server may maintain records of the results of the pinging, including a heartbeat record, a status record, and an event record. Each of these records may include a timestamp indicating a time at which the record was obtained. (Schick, 4:38-67.)

C. Liwerant

Liwerant describes a system for sharing a video segment over a computer network. Liwerant may present a user with a web page form to collect information from the user in connection with a video segment, including payment information, specifications such as resolution and/or image quality, and an additional copy of the files, such as a copy recorded on CD-ROM and sent to the user by the postal service.

D. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-8, 37-45, and 52-57 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Perkes, Liwerant, and Schick, in some cases in combination with additional references. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Claims 1-8, 52, and 55-57 are directed to determining how to send an image to a client based on the presence or absence of a previously recorded indication for the client. If a distribution server has previously recorded an indication that the client has communicated with the server via a communications link, such as the Internet, the server sends the image via the communications link. If no such indication has previously been recorded, the server sends the image via an alternative method, such as by recording the image on a physical computer-readable medium and sending it via the postal service. Claims 1 and 55 recite:

determining whether an indication has previously been recorded that the client system has communicated with the distribution [or computing] system via the communications link;

if it is determined that an indication has previously been recorded that the client system has communicated with the distribution [or computing] system via the communications link, sending the image to the client system via the communications link; and

if it is determined that an indication has not previously been recorded that the client system has communicated with the distribution [or computing] system via the communications link, indicating to send the image to the client system via a mechanism other than the communications link.

The Examiner acknowledges that Perkes does not disclose "determining whether an indication has previously been recorded that the client system has communicated with the distribution system via a communications link." The Examiner cites Schick at 4:38-67 as disclosing this recited feature. In particular, the Examiner cites Schick's "identifier identified record as a heartbeat record, the timestamp indicates a time at which the record was obtained." (Office Action, Feb. 19, 2009, pp. 3-4.)

The cited portion of Schick describes several different pinging records that are maintained by Schick's server. Schick's server sends pinging signals to multiple resource targets to determine the status of the targets. Schick's server may maintain records of the results of the pinging, including a heartbeat record, a status record, and an event record. Each of these records may include a timestamp indicating the time at which the record was obtained. At most, however, Schick discloses maintaining a record of a communication between a server and a target. Schick fails to disclose determining how to send an image to a target based on the presence or absence of a record for the target. In particular, Schick fails to disclose:

if it is determined that an indication has previously been recorded that the client system has communicated with the distribution [or computing] system via the communications link, sending the image to the client system via the communications link; and

if it is determined that an indication has not previously been recorded that the client system has communicated with the distribution [or computing] system via the communications link, indicating to send the image to the client system via a mechanism other than the communications link,

as recited by claims 1 and 55. The other cited references also fail to disclose these recited features.

For at least these reasons, applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 and 55 patentable over the cited references, as are their dependent claims 2-8, 52, and 56-57.

Claims 37-45 and 53 are directed to determining how to send a package of images to a client based on whether the client has recently communicated via a communications link. For example, if a client has recently communicated with a server via a communications link, such as the Internet, the server may send the package of images via the communications link. Otherwise, the server may send the package of image via an alternative method, such as by recording the images on a physical computer-readable medium and sending it via the postal service. Claim 37 recites:

a component that determines, for a package of images that is to be distributed to a client system, whether the package of images should be distributed to the client system via the communications link or via a mechanism other than the communications link based on whether a communication has recently been received via the communications link from the client system.

The Examiner cites Perkes at paragraphs [0078]-[0079] and [0125] as disclosing "a component that determines whether a package of images should be distributed to the client system via the communications link or the communication link based on when communications was received via the communication link from the client system." In particular, the Examiner indicates that Perkes teaches "the on/off line status of the

viewers computer is determined by the master agent." (Office Action, Feb. 19, 2009, p. 8.)

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's citation to Perkes as disclosing "a component that determines whether a package of images should be distributed to the client system via the communications link or the communication link based on when communications was received via the communication link from the client system" is not the same as:

a component that determines, for a package of images that is to be distributed to a client system, whether the package of images should be distributed to the client system via the communications link or via a mechanism other than the communications link based on whether a communication has recently been received via the communications link from the client system,

as recited by claim 37. Applicants' techniques determine which of multiple delivery mechanisms – e.g., a communications link or a mechanism other than the communications link – is to be used to distribute a package of images to the client. At most, Perkes describes sending a broadcast segment to a viewer if the viewer accepts the segment; otherwise, the segment is not sent to the viewer. (Perkes, ¶ [0078].) Perkes fails to disclose determining which of multiple mechanisms is to be used to send a broadcast segment to the viewer.

Moreover, Perkes fails to disclose a determination that is "based on whether a communication has recently been received via the communications link from the client system," as recited by claim 37. At most, when a broadcast segment is to be downloaded to a viewer, Perkes determines the current status – on line or off line – of a viewer's computer. (Perkes, ¶ [0078], [0125].) If the viewer is currently on line, Perkes provides information associated with the broadcast segment to the viewer and allows the viewer to download the broadcast. Unlike applicants' techniques, Perkes offers no teaching or suggestion that a determination is made "based on whether a

communication has recently been received via the communications link from the client system."

The Examiner acknowledges that Perkes does not disclose "sending the image to the client system via a mechanism other tha[n] the communications link," and relies on Ligerant at paragraph [0052] to cure this deficiency. In particular, the Examiner cites Ligerant's "resolution and/or image quality desired by the user of sender A's computer 10, and the provision of the file in some additional option form, such as recorded on CD-ROM and sent to the user of sender's computer 10 by postal service." (Office Action, Feb. 19, 2009, pp. 8-9.)

The Examiner's citation to Perkes as disclosing sending content via the Internet and to Ligerant as sending content via a CD-ROM does not satisfy the Examiner's burden. The Examiner has not cited a reference or combination of references that discloses determining which of multiple delivery mechanisms is to be used to send content. In particular, the Examiner has not cited a reference or combination of references that discloses:

a component that determines, for a package of images that is to be distributed to a client system, whether the package of images should be distributed to the client system via the communications link or via a mechanism other than the communications link based on whether a communication has recently been received via the communications link from the client system,

as recited by claim 37. At most, Perkes describes sending a broadcast segment to a viewer if the viewer accepts the segment; otherwise, the segment is not sent to the viewer. (Perkes, ¶ [0078].) Perkes fails to disclose determining which of multiple mechanisms is to be used to send a broadcast segment to the viewer. At most, Ligerant describes sending an additional copy of content to a user by recording the content on a CD-ROM and sending it by the postal service. (Ligerant, ¶ [0052].)

Liverant fails to disclose determining which of multiple mechanisms is to be used to send the content to the user.

For at least these reasons, applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 37 is patentable over the cited references, as are its dependent claims 38-45 and 53.

Claims 46-51 and 54 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Perkes, Liverant, and Fleming, in some cases in combination with additional references. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Claims 46-51 and 54 are directed to determining how to send an image to a client based on a recorded indication for the client. An indication is recorded for a client when heartbeat communications are received from the client over the Internet. Claim 46 recites "determining whether an image is to be sent to a client system via the Internet or via some other mechanism based on heartbeat communications received from the client system as indicated by the recorded indications of the receipt of heartbeat communications."

The Examiner cites Perkes at paragraph [0078] as disclosing "determining whether an image is to be sent to a client system via the Internet based on communications received from the client system as indicated by the recorded indications of the receipt of communications system." In particular, the Examiner indicates that Perkes teaches "if the viewer [is] on line, the viewer is provided certain information about the broadcast segment (digital photos, video or MP3), and if the viewer [is] offline, broadcast Notification is stored for future notification." (Office Action, Feb. 19, 2009, pp. 18-19.)

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's citation to Perkes as disclosing "determining whether an image is to be sent to a client system via the Internet based on communications received from the client system as indicated by the recorded

indications of the receipt of communications system" is not the same as "determining whether an image is to be sent to a client system via the Internet or via some other mechanism based on heartbeat communications received from the client system as indicated by the recorded indications of the receipt of heartbeat communications," as recited by claim 46 (emphasis added). Applicants' techniques determine which of multiple delivery mechanisms – e.g., the Internet or another mechanism – is to be used to send an image to the client. As described above, at most, Perkes describes sending a broadcast segment to a viewer if the viewer accepts the segment; otherwise, the segment is not sent to the viewer. (Perkes, ¶ [0078].) Perkes fails to disclose determining which of multiple mechanisms is to be used to send a broadcast segment to the viewer.

Moreover, Perkes fails to disclose a determination that is based on "recorded indications," as recited by claim 46. At most, when a broadcast segment is to be downloaded to a viewer, Perkes determines the current status – on line or off line – of a viewer's computer. (Perkes, ¶ 0078].) If the viewer is currently on line, Perkes provides information associated with the broadcast segment to the viewer and allows the viewer to download the broadcast. Unlike applicants' techniques, Perkes offers no teaching or suggestion that a determination is made based on a "recorded indication."

The Examiner acknowledges that Perkes does not disclose "sending the image to the client system via a mechanism other tha[n] the communications link," and relies on Ligerant at paragraph [0052] to cure this deficiency. In particular, the Examiner cites Ligerant's "resolution and/or image quality desired by the user of sender A's computer 10, and the provision of the file in some additional option form, such as recorded on CD-ROM and sent to the user of sender's computer 10 by postal service." (Office Action, Feb. 19, 2009, p. 19.)

As discussed above, the Examiner's citation to Perkes as disclosing sending content via the Internet and to Ligerant as sending content via a CD-ROM does not

satisfy the Examiner's burden. The Examiner has not cited a reference or combination of references that discloses determining which of multiple delivery mechanisms is to be used to send content. In particular, the Examiner has not cited a reference or combination of references that discloses "determining whether an image is to be sent to a client system via the Internet or via some other mechanism based on heartbeat communications received from the client system as indicated by the recorded indications of the receipt of heartbeat communications," as recited by claim 46. At most, Perkes describes sending a broadcast segment to a viewer if the viewer accepts the segment; otherwise, the segment is not sent to the viewer. (Perkes, ¶ [0078].) Perkes fails to disclose determining which of multiple mechanisms is to be used to send a broadcast segment to the viewer. At most, Liwerant describes sending an additional copy of content to a user by recording the content on a CD-ROM and sending it by the postal service. (Liwerant, ¶ [0052].) Liwerant fails to disclose determining which of multiple mechanisms is to be used to send the content to the user.

For at least these reasons, applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 46 is patentable over the cited references, as are its dependent claims 47-51 and 54.

In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

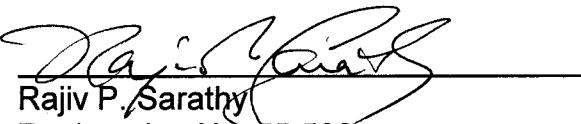
E. Conclusion

In view of the above amendment and remarks, applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance and respectfully request a prompt Notice of Allowance.

If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Steven D. Lawrenz at (206) 359-8000.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: April 16, 2009



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